



TESTIMONY OF  
**ALEXANDER M. WALDROP**  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
NATIONAL THOROUGHBRED RACING ASSOCIATION

Before the  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE AND  
CONSUMER PROTECTION**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE HEARING ON

“BREEDING, DRUGS, AND BREAKDOWNS:  
THE STATE OF THOROUGHBRED HORSERACING AND THE WELFARE OF THE  
THOROUGHBRED RACEHORSE”

June 19, 2008

Chairwoman Schakowsky, Ranking Member Whitfield, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association and its 65 member racetracks, 40 horsemen's groups and one million individual supporters.

NTRA is Thoroughbred racing's only centralized authority representing virtually all industry stakeholders, including owners, breeders, trainers, racetracks, riders, racing fans and veterinarians. As such, we serve the industry as a consensus builder around solutions to problems of national importance to the horseracing industry.

With an industry as diverse as ours, consensus is sometimes difficult. Nonetheless, our stakeholders agree that the health and safety of our equine athletes is paramount to our sport.

From its earliest days, pari-mutuel horseracing has partnered with state governments to sanction and regulate horse racing both as a sport and as a pari-mutuel wagering industry. State government insures the public of the integrity of our operations through independent oversight and verification.

States regulate our industry through state racing commissions. These individual commissions operate under the umbrella of the Association of Racing Commissioners International or RCI, which develops and promulgates national standards called model rules of racing. The challenge of our state regulated structure is to implement uniform rules in all 38 racing jurisdictions.

Some are questioning whether our industry has the governing structure necessary to effect change. I can't speak to the distant past but I can tell you that recently this industry has been making great strides towards

uniformity at the national level and the NTRA has been an important catalyst for that change.

One of the foremost examples of cooperative, uniform solutions to industry-wide challenges is the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium. The RMTC is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 23 industry stakeholder groups including state regulators, veterinarians, and chemists, as well as horse owners, trainers, breeders, and racetracks from all racing breeds.

Working with guidance from the RMTC, the RCI has developed a comprehensive set of model rules which govern the use of drugs and therapeutic medications in racing. These model rules have now been adopted in 32 of 38 racing jurisdictions, including all major racing states. The RMTC has also helped the RCI develop tough but fair standardized penalties for drug violations. These tougher penalties are

now in place in almost half of all states that conduct horseracing with more states expected to adopt the model penalties soon.

Most recently, we have worked closely on a policy regarding anabolic steroids. With the full support of our industry, the RCI has called for all racing states to adopt a standardized rule removing anabolic steroids from racing and race training by the end of 2008. Some 28 states are now in the process of removing anabolic steroids from competition, with the remaining 10 expected to follow suit shortly.

Likewise, for several years we have been addressing equine health and safety issues on a national basis. In 2006, our industry initiated numerous national studies in areas such as injury reporting, track surfaces, veterinary research and equine injury prevention programs. The Jockey Club's Thoroughbred Safety Committee is a perfect example of the cooperative work being done to address our sport's health and safety issues at the national level. In fact, as you heard

earlier from Mr. Marzelli, more safety measures have been recommended and the NTRA will help in advocating for these changes.

The last thing this industry needs is another layer of bureaucracy. A Department of Horse-Land Security funded by yet another tax on our long-suffering customers? No Thanks.

We are making progress towards uniformity in drug testing and medication rules; removing steroids from racing competition; implementing an injury reporting system; exploring new, synthetic track surfaces to reduce injuries; and continuing to conduct industry-funded research into the causes of equine injuries.

The horseracing industry should be allowed to continue its efforts to build a more uniform and cohesive health and safety program for its participants. We at the NTRA and our industry stakeholders are uniquely qualified and fully committed to working through our sport's complex issues as they relate to equine health and safety, relying on sound

science and research. I believe that the NTRA's leadership, plus improved drug and safety rules, more transparency and expanded research, coupled with continued oversight from this committee and the states is the best recipe for the progress we all seek. Our horses and our fans deserve no less.